(b) if so, what are the reasons for the delay in implementing the modernisation plan?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) and (b) The Textile Research Associations have prepared plans for modernisation of the NTC mills, including that of Azam Jahi Mills. The Labour Ministry's Special Tripartite Committee on the NTC has recommended, inter-alia, that the NTC mills as well as its taken over mills can be made viable by modernisation as propsed by the Textile Research Associations. Various details of the modernisation plans, including source of funding etc. are being examined in Government and no decision has been taken so far. Since the cases of 8 out of 9 subsidiaries of the NTC have been referred to the BIFR, any final scheme that may emerge would require the approval of the BIFR.

Child Labours in carpet Industry

1215. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether is Government's attention has been drawn to a news item under the caption "Government statement on Child Labour flayed" which appeared in the 'Hindustan Times', dated February 23, 1995 describing a recent statement of the Ministry of Textiles that all child labourers were freed and that the Carpet Industry was free of child labourers as misleading;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the reaction of Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. What has been stated by Ministry of Textiles is that due to persistent efforts made by the Government, the incidence of child labour in the wage earning segment in the Indian Carpet Industry has declined during the last two years. This revelation is based on the findings of a survey got conducted by the office of the Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles through the Natitnal Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) in 1992 and again in 1994 following various punitive, welfare and oher social measures. The important findings are:—

Sl. No.	Findings	1992	1994
1	Percentage of children employed		7.5
	(a) family segment	4.4	4.8
	(b) wage segment	3.0	2.7
2	Percentage of literacy rate	35	59
3	Percentage of children working more than 8 hours a day	84	25
4	Avergae working hours	9.2	7.8

There is also now a general awareness among parents that employing children in carpet weaving is detrimental to their future prospects and against law. NCAER at no stage has stated that the figures furnished by the Government are baseless. On the contrary, the figures quoted by the Government are based on the findings of the survey undertaken by NCAER.

(c) In order to meet the problem and to counter the adverse propoganda being made within and outside the country, the Government has taken the following measures:-

(i) Enforcement of the relevant child labour laws in the carpet belt in eastern Uttar Pradesh through the State Government has been strenthened.

(ii) Ministry of Labour, Government of India with the assistance of the International Labour Organisation has been taking

several measures under the Integrated Programme for Eradication of child Labour. A National Authority for Elimination of Child Labour has been set up under the Chairmanship of Minister of Labour.

(iii) Non-formal education centres have been opened for non-formal education with vacational training for children released from hired labour.

(iv) Welfare measures have been initiated to rehabilitate the displaced children engaged in carpet weaving and their families by providing non-formal education, health care and alternative job opportunities to their parents.

(v) A number of NGOs have been motivated to create awareness amongst the parents through the message that sending children to carpet weaving at an early age will be detrimental to their future prospects.

(vi) Registration cum membership of the Carpet Export Promotion Council has been made compulsory for export of handmade carpets and the council has been motivated in adopting a self regulatory code of conduct.

(vii) Steps have also been taken up at the diplomatic level through our missions abroad to counter the adverse publicity and also to apprise the governments of these countries of the steps being taken by the Government of India for eradication of child labour in carpet weaving.

Upgradation of Techniques and Product in Textiles Sector

1216. SHRI HIPHEI: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to certain suggestions made in the Seminar on World Trade System after Uruguay Round-Prospects for South Asian Countries held in New Delhi in February, 1995 that India must upgrade its product and managerial techniques and knowhow in the textiles sector to meet fierce competition from countries like China, Indonesia, South Korea etc.;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to take some action on these suggestions in the interest of progress of the country: and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) to (d) A seminar on "World Trade System after Uruguay Round" was held in February, 95 at New Delhi. The seminar focussed attention on studying the opportunities and prospects of World Trade System for South Asia after the Uruguay Round. The perceptions of South Asia countries regarding the future developments of the world trade system and the expected impact on foreign relations were also highlighted in the seminar.

Government has been taking a number of steps to enhance the competitive ability of our textiles and clothing exports industry so as to enable to take fuller advantages of increased opportunities under the quota free regime. The steps taken in this regard include ecouraging exporters to participate in buyer-seller meets, fairs and exhibitions; enabling import of capital goods at connessional duty for export production; special arrangements for duty-free import of raw materials for export production; ensuring increased availability of export credit etc.